



A Bi-Monthly Newsletter For Volunteers By Volunteers

CONNECTIONS

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

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Welcome Fall!

Gosh, what a year this has been! It's hard to believe that it's almost autumn. Even though Covid-19 mitigations are still with us, we continue to celebrate life at the Arboretum.

I don't know about you, but I have sorely missed all of our regular doings: tours, workshops, training, and events. Most of them have been moved to next year. But we do have a couple of group gardening activities coming up, later in September. We also have a new Arboretum Educator, Laura Fraser. We'll introduce her and the group projects on page 3.

Bill Carlos, on page 4, shares more Arboretum improvements. On page 5, the May Arboretum Society's Lavender Festival returned, and we have highlights of the fun. There are more social distancing suggestions on page 6 and even an interesting spot to visit on page 8

I hope you are all staying safe, happy, and healthy. And look forward to seeing you around the Arboretum soon!

Bev Treadway, Editor

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Volunteer's Corner

COVID-19 Impact Updates on Washoe County Parks

By Denise Evans

Unfortunately not much has changed since our last newsletter. When there are updates, they will be posted as soon as possible to the Washoe County Parks home page at www.WashoeCountyParks.com and often posted on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WashoeCountyParks/>. Here's a recap:

Park visitors must continue to maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing with non-household members at all times.

Per Emergency Directive 024, park users must wear a face covering when entering the restroom or entering any indoor park facility.

Playgrounds and park offices remain closed, however many park amenities such as tennis courts have opened.

All reservable buildings, picnic pavilions, group campsites, and Arboretum gardens are available for private reservation only with capacity restrictions (currently 25 people or less).

Most facilities have reopened with modifications including the Davis Creek Campground, May Museum, and Regional Shooting Facility.

This information is currently effective indefinitely but can change at any time as we receive additional directives from the Governor. Washoe County Parks works closely with the City of Reno and City of Sparks so that our park operations are consistent across the county. For additional COVID-19 information affecting our region, visit these websites:

Modified hours and services for all County departments:
<https://www.washoecounty.us/reduced-operations.php>

The City of Reno/City of Sparks/Washoe County Regional Information Center:
<https://covid19washoe.com/>



Social Distancing - Volunteering in the Gardens

By Bev Treadway



We still need volunteer help with different projects in the gardens. If you are new to volunteering this year, here is the current process for picking a gardening assignment, getting signed up, and what the COVID-19 guidelines at the Arboretum.

Go to the Volgistics Volunteer Portal. After logging in, click on the "My Schedule" tab. You will see a calendar with "Help Wanted" sign on the available date. Click on the date you want, and it will bring up a selection of projects and descriptions. Click on the "Schedule Me" button to sign up for that task.
<https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.dll/?from=480484>

Please email Denise Evans if you need assistance logging into the Portal, or if you have any questions. If you are not a registered volunteer, she can help with that too! devans@washoecounty.us

Due to COVID-19 guidelines, there are temporary precautions in place, along with Social Distancing protocols.

- ◆ Please bring your own tools and gloves, whenever possible.
- ◆ Face coverings are required when using the restroom facilities, entering any indoor park facility, or when 6 feet of social distancing isn't possible. Face coverings are not required to be worn during active gardening if working alone, but please keep one handy.
- ◆ Also please bring along hand sanitizer and your own water bottle. It's almost fall, but the days are warm.
- ◆ The Arboretum Offices are closed, but the restrooms are open at the Visitor's Center.

Volunteer's Corner Upcoming Gardening Projects!

By Bev Treadway

Here is some exciting news for those of you who are missing that volunteer to volunteer connection you get from working on a joint project. We have 3 project days coming up in September for those folks who would like to help. It doesn't matter if you are a Master Gardener, or someone who just wants to learn more about planting native species and milkweed in our area, all are welcome. These events are open to all volunteers, but due to COVID-19 mitigation, spaces are limited for some projects. Be sure to sign up early!

Even though these are group events, there is room enough to social distance while working.

For the first project, we are planning to continue with our **rehabilitation of the Evans Creek wetlands** in the Arboretum with a native species planting from 8am-11am on Tuesday, September 22 and Thursday, September 24. The plants will include milkweed grown in the Arboretum greenhouse. You can sign up via the Volunteer Portal at <https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.dll/?from=480484>

Later on that same week, **Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful** will be holding their Truckee River Cleanup on Saturday, September 26 from 9am-12pm. This is an event with cleanup sites spread throughout the county, focusing on the Truckee River and other related watersheds. Sign-ups have just been posted on their website at <https://www.ktmb.org/volunteer>. It is a separate event, so you must go through the KTMB link to sign up and you don't need to be an Arboretum volunteer to participate. Volunteers might be interested to know that one of the sites will be a native species and milkweed planting at Rancho San Rafael Park with our Natural Resource Planner Joanne Lowden - again, using milkweed grown in the Arboretum greenhouse! The planting will not take place in the Arboretum though, but along the new section of trail past Herman's Pond. As a side note, the other Washoe County sites will include Lockwood Park, Crystal Peak Park, Mayberry Park, and Dorostkar. Denise Evans is scheduled as the site leader at Mayberry. They do not plan to have more than 30 volunteers at a site, people will be asked to social distance, and as of now masks will be required at all times. Keep checking their website for details.



The Truckee River in the Fall



Narrow-leaf milkweed blooming in mid-summer

A New Arboretum Educator Joins Us in September

By Bill Carlos

Please help us welcome **Laura Fraser**, the new Educational Program Coordinator at the Arboretum. She will begin the first week in September. She is a recent graduate from the University of Northern Iowa and holds two degrees, a B.S. in Biology and B.S. in Earth Science. Laura brings lots of experience teaching, training, and working with volunteers, as well as program development. She also worked at a 40-acre arboretum and assisted in maintaining 6 greenhouses, each with their own unique plants and climate. In addition, she was with the Peace Corps working in a horticulture center in a rural village in Benin, West Africa. Friendly and enthusiastic, we look forward to having her join our team.

(We will do a Meet the Staff Interview with Laura, along with a picture, in our next newsletter. - Bev)

Wilbur D. May Arboretum Upgrades

By Bill Carlos

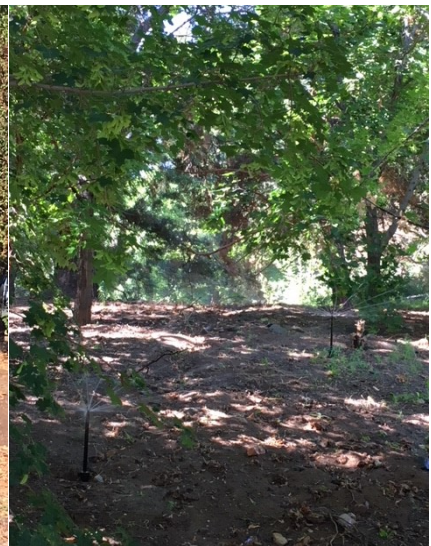
Many thanks to the May Arboretum Society for supporting two well needed irrigation upgrades for the Arboretum. The first irrigation upgrade (\$11,581.00) was completed in the spring of 2019. It replaced the Nevada Bell Grove “bubbler” system. These systems were popular in the 80’s and were used extensively in our groves.

Unfortunately, bubblers are temporary. Ours needed to be replaced as maturing tree roots squeezed pipes shut, restricting water flow to them. The constraint resulted in 20 to 35-year-old trees dying and in poor health. The grove was “surviving, but not thriving”. In using new underground, overhead, low precipitation rate pop-up sprinkler systems to water the grove, we noticed a marked improvement in the health and vigor of these trees in just one season. The main reason for this: water is applied under the canopy and beyond the drip line of the tree, not just at the base of the tree like the older bubble systems were designed to do. Staff is noticing no drought symptoms, e.g., less dieback and tree mortality. Upgrades have not only improved tree health and vigor but also increase staff efficiency as they no longer need to drag hoses and temporary sprinklers to these sites.

As with the Nevada Bell grove, the irrigation system that supports Honey’s Garden, Songbird Garden, Soroptimist International Maple Grove, and into Honey’s Rose and Perennial Garden was also outdated. Staff determined it was necessary to replace it with an overhead system. This upgrade was completed in the fall of 2019, at a cost of \$14,586.00 (thanks again, to the May Arboretum Society). The upgrade included new electrical lines to power a new **Rain Bird** irrigation pedestal controller which is located above Honey’s Garden. Six new valves, along with new wires were installed along with the controller. Two automatic valves were connected to overhead low precipitation rate pop-up sprinkler heads to water the grove while the other new valves were used to deliver water to new drip lines and emitters that service the roses and perennials surrounding Honey’s Garden. Since this new system was installed, staff have noticed an improvement in overall tree and plant health and vigor. Like the Nevada Bell Grove, it also increased staff efficiency by eliminating hand watering.



Stock photo of the old style bubbler system.



These photos are an example of the overhead systems that were installed at both sites.

Social Distancing Family Fun

By Bev Treadway

Visit the Arboretum for some Fall color. In September and October, the trees at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum put on an amazing color show. Everywhere you turn there is an ever-changing display of bright yellows, deep reds and purples, and glorious shades of orange. Take a walk and soak it all in. It will brighten your day and lighten your load.

Take a drive to Apple Hill in Placerville, Ca. Fall is the perfect time to visit the farms at Apple Hill. Go apple picking and bring some home to turn into pies or apple sauce. If you don't like to peel and core apples, you can always pick up some premade frozen pies to take home. Check their website for directions, details, and COVID-19 guidelines. <https://applehill.com>

Get Crafting! I love the annual pumpkin contest at the Washoe County Libraries. Each librarian would decorate a pumpkin to put on display. Library patrons could vote on their favorite. The winner was announced right before Halloween. Since it's been canceled this year, I've decided to do my own contest at home and maybe get the neighbors in on it as well. Try it with your inner circle! I've been checking out Pinterest for inspiration.

Help your child or grandchild become a budding naturalist. The Wilbur D. May Arboretum has a Naturalist program that is a perfect social distancing project. The Jr. Naturalist Guide is for ages 10 and younger, and the Naturalist Guide is for ages 11 and older. Activities are designed to encourage a sense of wonder, mystery, and scientific discovery in nature. Complete a Jr. Naturalist or Naturalist Guide, mail it in with \$1, and we will mail back your completed guide with a Wilbur's Naturalist Patch. Guides can be found at this link https://www.washoecounty.us/parks/maycenterhome/arboretum/learn_explore/kids_programs/wilburs_explorer_pack.php

Plant some fall bulbs that you bought at the May Arboretum Society Fall Bulb Festival. It's on October 10, 2020 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at St. Patrick's Grove, in the grassy area by the Ranch House Parking lot. Spring flowering bulbs such as mixed tulips, daffodils, crocus, and more are for sale. Food trucks and other vendors will keep you snacking. COVID-19 mitigation rules are in place. Go to <https://www.mayarboretumsociety.org/events.html> for details.



Above, Honey's Garden waterfall.



Above right, Spring blooming Grape Hyacinths, the result of a fall bulb planting.

Right, a bakery photo of the mouth-watering selection of apple doughnuts and coffee at Boa Vista.



A Day Filled with the Scent of Lavender

May Arboretum Society Presents the 6th Annual Lavender Day

By Bev Treadway



The lavender garden near Verdi.



One of the many tables of items for sale at the festival. These pictures, and more, can be found on the MAS website.

<https://www.mayarboretumsociety.org/monthly-moments.html>

One of the highlights this summer at the Arboretum was the 6th annual Lavender Festival at St Patrick's Grove. For a while it wasn't clear if it was going to happen amid the COVID-19 restrictions. But thankfully, the festival was able to go forward on July 11th with mitigation guidelines in place.

The May Arboretum Society always puts on a fun event. Lavender flowers are harvested from a huge garden near Verdi. Lavender bunches, 25 wreaths, and wand kits were assembled to sell, along with squeezing 50 pounds of lemons to make Susan's Lavender Lemonade. It's pretty much everything you can imagine in lavender form.

Master Gardeners were on hand to share their growing knowledge to those purchasing potted lavender plants to take home. As well, there were local artisans and vendors with their assortment of honey, essential oils, jewelry, mosaics, candles, specialty face masks, and oh, so much more!

At the red tent there were mini lectures on cooking with lavender and honey, infusing lavender, and using essential oils for better health. To round up the day, there was music by Monique De Haviland, and a raffle.

We needed a bit of normalcy this summer and the Lavender Festival definitely provided us with that. Thank you, MAS.



An example of the beautifully crafted wreaths for sale at the Lavender Festival.

Activity Dates To Look Forward To!

September 2020

- ♦ September 22 and 24 - Milkweed Planting Project at the Arboretum (Check the Volunteer Portal for details and to sign up!)
- ♦ September 26 - Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful Annual Truckee River Clean Up. 9 am - 12 for details visit <https://www.ktmb.org/cleanups>



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October 2020

- ♦ October 10- Fall Bulb Sale at St. Patrick's Grove 9am-3pm
- ♦ October 30 - Nevada Day
- ♦ October 31 - Halloween
- ♦ Check out page 5 for some things to do while social distancing this fall!



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Interesting Spots to Check Out

Great Basin Basketmaker's Exhibit in Songbird Garden

By Bev Treadway

Songbird Garden is a truly special place to visit. When I first started coming to the Arboretum, Songbird was a bit of an enigma to me. It seemed like even though there was food, shelter and water from Evan's Creek, the birds were all hanging out over at Burke's Garden. Adding a water feature helped, but Songbird still remained pretty quiet. The name didn't quite fit.

But now there is a little more activity in Songbird garden. For the past year or so, there has been an exhibit of woven bird and basket sculptures, three pieces in all, tucked into the trees. These were created by the Great Basin Basketmakers guild, a local group who share their skills in the 10,000 year-old tradition of basketry throughout the Reno area. This beautiful exhibit was originally on display at the Nevada State Museum. Made from Alpaca hair, willow, rope, and other fibers, these creations are now resting in the leaves blending into the surroundings. The birds come by and snatch a twig or two from the weavings to add to their own nests.

And it's okay. The living birds are part of part of the exhibit, as well. As the artwork naturally decays over time, and the animals harvest little treasures, the final take away is to remind us of how all things become recycled and repurposed over time, singing a new song of life.



Pictures are from last year's installation of the Songbird Basket Exhibit (From the May Arboretum website)

Entering the [Wilbur D. May Arboretum & Botanical Garden](#), you can sense that there is something special here. With a diverse plant community, beautiful garden layouts, and foliage changing with the seasons, it really is the jewel of Reno, Nevada! We have opportunities for all ages to explore, learn, celebrate, and get involved. Take a look around and see what peaks your interests. Your next outdoor adventure awaits at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum & Botanical Garden!

